



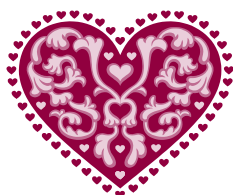
U.S. Department of State Career Transition Center

CTC NEWSLETTER

(Print Version)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Feature article	1-4
Editor's Note	4-5
Job Leads	5
Attention JSP Grads	6



**Happy
Valentine's
Day!**

"Desire is the key to motivation, but it's determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal — a commitment to excellence — that will enable you to attain the success you seek."

- Mario Andretti

Your "Secret" Job Search Weapon

- prepared by PSS & CTC

A security clearance is a very valuable asset in job searches these days, especially in the Washington, D.C. area.

Whether you only wish to work occasionally as a WAE ("When Actually Employed") in State Department and AID or you are hired by a government contractor, an existing – or easily renewable – security clearance will move your name closer to the front of the line of possible candidates. In the February 25, 2002 edition of *The Washington Business Journal*, Paul Villella attributed the increased demand for security clearances to the war on terrorism in his article "Uncle Sam wants



you ... if you can keep a (top) secret." Villella even claims that some companies and websites have programmed their scanners of electronic resumes to search for the words "security" and "clearance." In the August 11, 2003 issue of *BusinessWeek Online*, an article entitled "Sorry, Your Job is Classified" described the growing frustration of government contractors regarding the clearance process.

According to that article, the Pentagon alone had a backlog of 240,000 security clearance applications and estimated a six months wait for a security clearance.

Only the federal government can grant a security clearance; a private company, even if it is a government contractor, cannot grant a security clearance. (A government contractor is a private company that has a contract or grant from the federal government that requires them to handle sensitive information or equipment.) Only a government agency or govern-

"We're all worm bait waiting to happen. It's what you do while you wait that matters."

- Kinky Friedman in When The Cat's Away

ment contractor can request a clearance for an individual; you cannot request a clearance as an independent individual. In the case of the contractor, the company must usually have hired the individual for whom they are requesting the clearance – even if he cannot do the job he was hired for until he receives the security clearance.

The national security agencies (e.g., CIA and NSA), the federal law enforcement agencies (e.g., FBI and Secret Service), defense agencies (e.g. DIA and DSS), and some specialized agencies (e.g., State Department) perform the investigations and grant the clearances. For instance, if you decide to work as a WAE for State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), then WHA will send your clearance forms to State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) for action. If you decide to work for the National Institute of Health (NIH) to research the impact of anthrax spores on large populations, then the NIH would send your forms to the Office of Personnel Management for action. If you decide to work for a defense contractor, then that company would probably send your forms to the Department of Defense for action.

So, if you have the skills and experience required and your clearance update will only take a few weeks, you may have a better chance of employment with a private company than a person whose clearance will require a year – employing you will save the company money and time. This article will help you protect that asset.

Before Retirement

Diplomatic Security's Office of Personnel Security and Suitability (PSS) is responsible for all security clearance information for the Department of State. Employees of their new Customer Service Center helped us prepare this article.

A recent PSS innovation is the inclusion of security clearance information in your "Employee Profile" -- previously known as your "PAR" or your Personnel Action Record. Another innovation by the State Department Bureau of Human Resources (HR) is to allow employees access to their Employee Profiles via the "e-phone" directory on the Intranet – the same site where you find your Earnings & Leave statements. Your Employee Profile now shows your security clearance level, the date your clearance was granted, and the date of any updates (known as periodic "re-investigations"). Before you retire, while you still have access to the Intranet, be sure to check your Employee Profile for the status of your security clearance. If you find any mistakes, then contact the PSS Customer Service Center (CSC) to request corrective action well in advance of your effective retirement date. Current Department employees may call the CSC at 571-345-3186 or e-mail at securityclearance@state.gov.



(Note: CTC recommends that you check all the information on your Employee Profile before retirement. Work with HR and DS to correct any mistakes before your retirement.)

For information on the security clearance

process or to check the status of an investigation, you can check the PSS Intranet site located at <http://dsweb.state.gov/pss>. It contains the answers to many security clearance questions. It also has a nice "Periodic Reinvestigation Security Package Checklist" with all the forms required for your security clearance update. You might want to print out the checklist and forms to take with you and keep in your file with the old copies of your Standard Form 86 "Questionnaire for National Security Positions."

You never know when the President is finally going to realize you that you've been right all these years and call you back into service in order to solve the Middle East crisis, so make sure that you keep the most recent SF-86 you had to fill out to use as a reference. You've probably been saving these for the past 20 years – few people have all the residential addresses and telephone numbers of their entire lifetime memorized, right? So, don't burn your most recent copy ceremoniously upon retirement. You never know when you might need to reactivate that clearance!

After Retirement

What happens to my security clearance if I sign up to work as a WAE immediately after my retirement? If you plan to work as a State Department WAE after retirement, register with a bureau before your effective retirement date. The Bureau will submit a DS-1143 "Request for Security Clearance" to PSS indicating your change to WAE status. Upon making the transition to WAE status, you will still be recognized as

*"Turn loose and have fun.
Give the audience a show."*

- Roy Acuff

an employee within the shared HR and PSS databases. Your

clearance will remain active and periodic reinvestigations will continue to be initiated through the PSS Case Management System.

What happens to my security clearance if I don't want to work as a WAE immediately after my retirement? If you don't register as a WAE when you retire from State Department, then your security file will remain in the possession of PSS for five years. After five years, the file is sent to the Regional Service Center or the Washington Records center for an additional 15 years, after which time it will be destroyed. After retirement from the Department of State, you may contact PSS's Customer Service Center directly to obtain information regarding your clearance. The information provided will be for the individual's use and will not be issued as a formal certification. The PSS Customer Service Center (CSC) may be contacted by e-mail at **security-clearance@state.gov** or at their toll free number, 1-866-643-INFO (4636).

How do I reactivate my clearance if I get tired of golfing and watching Oprah? If at any time within 20 years of your retirement you want to go back to work and need a clearance for your new job, your new employer will send PSS the appropriate request forms and your file will be recovered from storage.

- If your last periodic re-investigation was completed within the prior 5 years, if you have been retired or otherwise separated





from U.S. government employment for no more than 2 years, and if you are going to work for State Department or a State Department contractor, then your clearance may be revalidated fairly quickly. PSS will review your security file and approve it for the next five years. The revalidation process is normally completed in less than two weeks.

- If you are going to work for another USG agency or another agency's contractor, then PSS will dig out your file and forward it to that agency's investigative branch. In that case, the revalidation process will definitely take longer than two weeks.
- If you have been separated more than two years, you will have to fill out all the forms for your new employer, including the dreaded SF-86. The new investigation – performed by DS or another USG agency – will resemble a routine periodic reinvestigation (investigation from the date of the last investigation) and will take approximately 90 days.

You can access the appropriate security clearance forms and learn more about the clearance process on the Office of Personnel Management website, www.opm.gov/extra/investigate/security-clearance.asp. Your employer may also give you an access password to fill out and submit these forms on “e-qip,” the new Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing which is a secure website that allows you to complete and store an electronic version of the SF-86 (www.opm.gov/e-qip/).

It is important to include any prior clear-

ance information in all this paperwork -- the level of your clearance and the USG agency that granted it (for most of us, this would be Top Secret by State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security). This information will allow the USG agency processing your clearance to determine if your last investigation is still current or if you require a periodic re-investigation before you are hired or re-hired.

Summary

So, check your Employee Profile before you retire and hold on to that old SF-86. You never know when you'll start missing the glamour and intrigue of the bureaucracy or be lured from blissful retirement by a desperate and devious beltway bandit!



More PSS Contact Details

Mailing Address:

DS/SI/PSS-Customer Service Center
1801 North Lynn Street
SA-20, 10th Floor
Washington D.C. 20522-2008

Physical Address:

DS/SI/PSS-Customer Service Center
U.S. Department of State
1801 North Lynn Street
SA-20, 11th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22209-2008

“Change is such hard work.”

- Billy Crystal

Editor's Note



Here are some sources of further information on the subject of security clearances:

"Uncle Sam wants you ... if you can keep a (top) secret." by Paul Villella in *The Washington Business Journal* on February 25, 2002

"Sorry, Your Job is Classified" in *BusinessWeek Online* on August 11, 2003

"Security Job Surge" by Jon Surmacz in *CIO.com Metrics* on October 8, 2003

"Getting a Security Clearance" by Derrick Dortch in *The Washington Post* on February 10, 2003

Defense Security Service – www.dss.mil

FBI website - www.fbi.gov

Office of Personnel Management – www.opm.gov/extra/investigate/security-clearance.asp

"If everything's under control, you're going too slow."

- Mario Andretti

Job Leads



Here are a few of the many web-sites that list jobs requiring a security clearance:

CIO.com – www.CIO.com (an IT news site that includes job ads)

ClearanceJobs.com – www.clearancejobs.com

CLEWS Classified Employment Web Site – www.yourinfosource.com/CLEWS

ComputerJobs.com – www.securityclearance.computerjobs.com

Dice.com – www.Dice.com (an IT job board)

SearchSecurity.com – www.searchsecurity.techtarget.com

TechExpoUSA.com – www.techexpousa.com (lists job fairs for people with security clearances)

"Failure may be just a step toward your eventual goal."

- Georgette Mosbacher

Attention JSP Grads!



The Ford Latin American Luncheon Group

Want to keep up with Latin American affairs? Want to meet with former colleagues who served in the Americas? Then FLAG is for you.

FLAG stands for the Ford Latin American Luncheon Group, an informal membership association of retired or former U.S. government officials who served in or dealt with Latin American or Caribbean affairs during



their careers. The group is named to honor the late John Ford, a Foreign Service officer, who devoted his career to Latin American affairs.

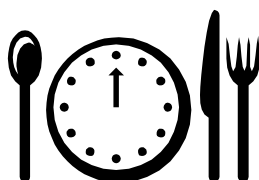
FLAG meets the second Wednesday of each month, except July and August, at 12 noon at the DACOR Bacon House at 1801 F Street, NW, Washington, DC. We have a brief social period and then have lunch. After lunch we have a well

qualified speaker on a subject of current interest in the hemisphere.

Recent speakers have included Manuel Orozco of the Inter-American Dialogue who spoke on Central America; Luigi Einaudi, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS who reviewed OAS activities; Ines Bustillo of ECLAC who brought us up to date on economic and financial developments; and Jorge Quiroga, former President of Bolivia.

We have no dues, no by-

laws, and no officers. The only requirement is that one be a retired or former U.S. government official who worked on Latin American affairs. We send an announcement each month by e-mail and by regular mail.



Those interested in attending call or e-mail us. If they then fail to cancel they will be charged. Lunches cost \$20 payable at the door in

cash or check. Guests are welcome. The invitation to the lunches is not transferable.

If you are interested, please call Bill Stedman at 202-637-6233 or e-mail him at wstedman@partners.net.

Next Job Fair

The next CTC Job Fair will be held on March 23, 2004.

*"Ambition is a dream
with a V8 engine."*

- Elvis Presley



CTC NEWSLETTER
FSI/TC/CTC
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.
20522-4201

Editor: Amy Pitts
Telephone: 703-302-7412
Facsimile: 703-302-7416
E-mail: pittsa@state.gov